

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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20

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01

DRC-01 /116 W

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O R 301200Z NOV 73 ZFF4

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO COMSIXTHFLT IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3804

NAVSUPPACT DET GAETA IT

AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 6646

FOR VADM MURPHY FROM AMBASSADOR; INFO CMDR MEUKOW

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, TS

SUBJECT: VISIT OF SIXTH FLEET BAND

1. I REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT HAS ASKED THAT WE CANCEL VISIT OF SIXTH FLEET BAND IN CONNECTION WITH YOUR VISIT FROM DEC 6-10. QUESTION OF BAND PRESENCE HAS BEEN UNDER REVIEW AT HIGH LEVELS IN GOT FOR PAST WEEK, AND AFTER CONSIDERABLE DELIBERATION GOT HAS CONCLUDED RELUCTANTLY THAT BAND SHOULD NOT PERFORM DURING THIS PARTICULAR VISIT.

2. IT CLEAR GOT CONCERNED THAT BAND BY ITS VERY PUBLIC EXPOSURE WOULD PRESENT HIGHER PROFILE THAN TUNISIANS BELIEVE IS DESIRABLE AT PRESENT STAGE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN MIDDLE EAST. FACTORS NO DOUBT CONTRIBUTING TO TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT DECISION ARE: RECENTNESS OF ALGIERS CONFERENCE, WITH ITS EMPHASIS ON ARAB UNITY THEME: FACT THAT YOU VISIT WILL BE FIRST VISIT OF SIXTH FLEET SHIP TO ARAB PORT SINCE OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES IN OCTOBER: AND POPULAR RPT POPULAR IDENTIFICATION OF SIXTH FLEET WITH USG SUPPORT OF ISRAEL AND REPORTS RE SIXTH FLEET MOVEMENTS DURING HOSTILITIES, WHICH STILL FRESH IN TUNISIAN MINDS.

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ALL TOGETHER, FOREGOING HAS LED TUNISIAN AUTHORITIES TO

BELIEVE THAT GENERAL PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE HERE IS UNFAVORABLE TO PUBLIC APPEARANCES OF SIXTH FLEET BAND.

3. TUNISIAN OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD US THAT THEY DO NOT IN ANY WAY WISH VISIT OF LITTLE ROCK TO CAUSE EMBARRASSMENT TO US OR INDEED TO THEMSELVES AND THEY CLEARLY FEEL THAT BAND CONCERTS MIGHT RUN THAT RISK. RATIONALE DOES NOT RPT NOT EXTEND TO YOUR VISIT OR VISIT OF LITTLE ROCK. IN FACT, MINISTER OF DEFENSE STRESSED TO ME THAT THEY WANT SPORTS COMPETITION TO PROCEED AS SCHEDULED. IT SIMPLY MEANS THAT TUNISIANS WOULD PREFER THAT VISIT BE AS ROUTINE AS POSSIBLE AND WITHOUT TOO MANY FLOURISHES.

4. I REALIZE THAT CANCELLATION AT THIS LATE DATE MAY WORK SOME HARDSHIP ON BAND MEMBERS AND AT VERY LEAST BE DISAPPOINTING TO THEM. PLEASE EXTEND TO THEM OUR SINCERE REGRETS AND OUR HOPE THAT THERE WILL BE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY FOR THEM TO PERFORM HERE BEFORE TOO LONG.

5. WARM REGARDS.

6. PLEASE ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THIS MESSAGE.
SEELYE

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NNN

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